

[Give People a Chance]

Beliefs and Customs - Folk Stuff [?]

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK 15 Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE NEW YORK

NAME OF WORKER Terry Roth Sam Schwartz

ADDRESS 47 West 69th Street 152 W 13 Street

DATE March 22, 1939

SUBJECT Give People A Chance

1. Date and time of interview

March 13th 1 P.M.

2. Place of interview

Unemployment Division, I.L.G.W.U.

3. Name and address of informant

Not Given

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4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.

5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

Sam Schwartz

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Terry Roth Sam Schwartz

ADDRESS 47 West 69 Street 152 West 13 Street

DATE March 22, 1939

SUBJECT Give People a Chance

"GIVE HIM A CHANCE"

"You got to elect the union officers every year. When he is for life, is no good. When I'm a foreman in the place and you work for me, if I have to worry about being foreman again, I am good to you. You feel sorry when the foreman leaves the place. Don't I want to be good to you? Is better for me to be foreman than operator. But when I am bad foreman I'll have to go back to the machine. I'll try to be good. So it's with union. Why shouldn't he

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be only one year he should know he must be elected again? Once I was chairman of the shop. They call a meeting and I don't feel good. I can't be to the meeting. The workers tell me. "It's very important. You must." So they call a meeting, it was right near the shop, and we came up there. I was presented with a present. It's still by me yet. I didn't expect it. A surprise. They force me to come. I'm a man I been through plenty. I belong to the union twenty eight years, and when I fight for somebody, I fight for the rights. But there is people holding office. Why? Because there is something in it. The truth must come out. All comes out in the wash. I remember it was a strike. The rights of left came out. We were 2 picketing. You think I would work? I wouldn't go if it was CIO or American Federation. I wouldn't go. See? It is brotherhood, but no union.

I'm suffering since then, since N.R.A. If I would take a couple of dollars and take and open in a candy store. Believe me, I would have plenty now. NOW it is the season. It IS the dress season. And look here, all the people-can't get work. It is the same in the cheap line, the same in the good line.

One thing I'm going to tell you. The way the Jewish bosses act even to the Jew is worster than Hitler and Mussolin Mussolini . A hundred Hitlers they wouldn't act that way. The Jew boss don't respect the man and woman. It makes no difference, ages. They only want Italians. Didn't I see it with my own eyes, they are advertising in the Italian papers? If I would go in business, I'm telling you the truth. If I invest \$1,000, I would like to make \$2,000. Everybody wants to make a / living. I'm telling you something. It is a girl went up in a place in Broadway. I thought she is a gentile. She tells me she's a Jew. In one place she is working four days and the Italians act so friendly. But when they find out she's a Jew, they turn their head away. "They don't recognize me any more". Here was a girl that she made a good week to remain over there. She made more than the scale. From that place they told her there is no more work. She seen those bundles they are giving the Italian workers.

How do you expect when you come up a new worker from the union. The boss, he gives you a garment to work. To take out pieces and make out a new garment. The old workers are sitting. They are ripping. If I'll give you after this a bundle, work already. You got experience. Like in a tailor shop. You want a suit made. You come for the first visit to have 3 for yourself a dress for a hundred dollars. You come a second time to try on. Take in here a little, leave out there a little. It's not perfect, even yet. That's what I say. Give a worker a chance he should get used to the place. I come up in a place Monday, he says Tuesday. Tuesday, he says Wednesday. On Thursday I wait another day. He tells me bring a partner. I bring. As soon he sees him starting to work, he's sending him away. GIVE HIM A CHANCE. Even a man that sits and works by you, when he gets a new garment is strange. Let him get acquainted with you. You know! He has to ask "where is the presser?" He is not used where is everything he needs. They handle them around just like dogs in the factory.

The union sends up a man to the boss. They look on him. They say "he's too slow". "I'M TOO SLOW?" I answered him. "You Know me?" I think I never see you. This is the first time I see you."

Three years ago I come into a place. From the pinking machine is dirt up to your neck. If I'm not lifting up my feet, would drag up to my neck. "Alright. Sit down to work". IN THE DIRT. I see what they are working. He gives me a small bundle. When I finish, he says that's all. I see the others, by them is bundles big like a house. "When is payday?" He says next week. I come Thursday. He says Friday. Friday, is Saturday. Saturday I says "make out my name and give me the pay." You know how it is Saturday. A little different. I was wearing the same suit, but my shoes, I have a shine. I walk into the place. I never seen the boss before. I didn't know him. You see so many dogs running around, you don't know which is the right dog. I go into the office. The door is closed. I wait a couple minutes. The door opens up. One man walks out. I walk in there. "My name is so and so.

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I came for my pay. Thursday. Friday, Saturday." He looks at me. "Oh," he says, "some workers look prosperous." "Oh, sure", I answer, "Some workers look prosperous and some bosses look like rotten cockroaches."

I'm an operator. No. I'm not tired, standing. I'm very light. Very light. I could talk to you all year round. I don't play no cards.

I remind myself. A boss gives a man a chair next to me. I see that he makes a mistake with a skirt. can see in the notches that it's not right. That what means a union sister and brother. I seen this fellow made mistakes and I'm going to help him before the boss should see it. Sometimes it happens there is workers they are ashamed. So I told him you made a mistake with the notches. And I showed him. And I started to work. I mind my business. He made a dress and it came to the Zipper he didn't know how. I don't know if it's good or bad. But the way I'm working, it's my system. So I show him. The boss passes by and he gives a look that I showed him. "That's all right," he says, "don't be afraid." Because when I'll show you, I'll show you the right way. There are some people, they'll show you in the wrong way, they should be the old timers in the place. Even a chair. You got to get used. A chair is too low. Or too high. OR it's on the left side of the shop and you're used to on the right side. Even after you'll be working a long time in a shop, I'll change you over to the sixth machine. You can't work already. Or the machine stands this way, OR the other way. It happens. I KNOW.

They call the young workers seamers. When they call worker years ago to work, "Hey, bring up a good worker, over there." Now you come up in a place to work, they try to give you a cross examination. More than about the citizens papers. They give you red tape. I'm telling you. You get blue 5 and red all kinds colors on the face. You don't know what to answer. A man will have to put on skirts. Then the bosses will act different. Some of the Jewish women are putting on a cross on her. I heard of such a girl. So, after she's working

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four days, she tells the boss she's Jewish. "And," she says, "I wish that your children and your wife should have to put on a cross to look for a job."

I was in [?] a candy store. A / Young fellow comes in there. I take a bottle Pepsicola in the store. He stands there. Talking. Talking. Talking. He's a presser. He takes out a bundle. Like a house! THEY are making a living. I'm an operator. Is to be a operator, you could be quicker a doctor than a mechanic on the machines. Now everything is from pieces, a thousand pieces. You have to be a mechanic with those pieces. They don't give a man work several times to do. Is like this. You go up to a shop and you go into the office where is the boss. He sits there like a king.

"You got to be verra fast. Not slow. But FAST. GOOD. AND FAST. When you'll make \$30.00 it wouldn't be enough for me."

You didn't see yet the plant. But you got to come in with the horses. It's a joke. Like the operation was successful but the patient died. The work is alright but if you can't make 30 dollars, you're fired. Who [seew?] a machine? Does he start to work? The work is alright, but you're too slow. You're fired. Go, Mr. Boss. let's run a race. I would be the operator and you be the horse.

What kind of thing is this. Two weeks before the holidays, people are hanging around here in season. Why can't they work? The ONLY THING is to put people to work. You go up in a shop where there is empty machines. No matter whether it's good or cheap dresses.

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Or it's slow. Full up the machines. Force it. Let him sit down and work. Let him work a week. Give people a chance. You cannot run a system, come and go, come and go. You are a boss. I would like to get a job in your place. Well? Give me.

I was telling you about this presser. A nice boy. About 23 years. Takes out a bundle bills. I'm looking at it. My eyes are falling out. He went over to play on the machines.

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"You married" I ask him. "No. Next year I'll be married." So I ask him. "What is your boss like? Any Jewish people working in your shop?" The way I ast him the question, he didn't answer me."

"What is your boss, a Jew?" "No, he's Italian." All the people what's in the shop is Italian."

Once I'm sitting in a shop. Sits a woman under me. All grey. The boss comes over and rungs her knee. Like a chicken she screams. I ask her, "You got a husband?" You know it isn't just a conversation to take her out. "Sure". "What's your husband doing?" "My husband works in a electric company. My children bring in money. I pay \$65 rent." "So what do you have to work?" "I like also to bring in money." I HAVE TO FIGHT to make a living of a couple of cents. And by her it's a joke. She like to bring in money also.